



Appendix

E

Proposed Trails To Be Made Accessible for Wheelchair Users

Nature Walk at Great Meadows by Cherrie Corey

Assabet-Nashoba Trail. Because a significant number of the residents of Concord Park in West Concord have mobility impairments, the proposed Assabet-Nashoba Trail should be made at least seasonally accessible to wheelchairs. In addition to grading, such accessibility will require either the removal of certain tracks and cross-ties from the railroad right-of-way or their burial under several inches of gravel, topped by a finer crushed-stone or similar surface. Although many individuals using wheelchairs are capable of crossing the present footbridge (behind Nashoba Bakery), for greater safety the slope of the short ramp closest to the bakery should be reduced.

Town Forest Trail. The trail from the parking lot on Walden Street to Fairyland Pond should be made seasonally accessible to wheelchairs, at least as far as the spillway. The forest is a beautiful centerpiece of the town's woodland environment, and the classic sylvan pond makes an inviting goal for wheelchair travelers, both residents and visitors. Trail accessibility improvements should be included in Concord's Management Plan for Fairyland Pond. The principal accessibility needs are the designation and marking of one or more handicapped parking spaces in the parking lot, and grading to create a more moderate slope in the steepest section of the trail. (Although it appears that the federal guidelines can be met, the federal government recognizes that full compliance is not always possible and discusses alternative solutions, such as steeper runner slopes with more frequent "resting intervals.")

Punkatasset Trail. The trail through Punkatasset Conservation Land from Monument Street, bearing left at the gate, passing between Turtle Pond and Hutchins Pond, and continuing at least as far as the

brook flowing down from Mink Pond, should be made into an accessible three-season trail. The trail runs by the base of historic Punkatasset Hill, where the Colonial Militia gathered before moving toward the battle at North Bridge, and by a beautiful vista of Hutchins Pond. Accessibility requires moderate grading of the trail and designation of a handicapped parking space on Monument Street.

Town Forest and Brister's Hill Trails. As the Walden Woods Project's October 2002 report notes, the interpretive site at Brister's Hill should be accessible "via existing trails from Walden Pond and through the Hapgood Woods." The Town installed a handicapped parking area in 2010, and implemented modifications in 2012 to provide a wheelchair accessible trail from the handicapped-parking area through a portion of Walden Woods Project land, looping back to the HC parking area. One or more proposed trails atop the capped landfill should be considered for seasonal wheelchair accessibility. Additional consideration should be given to providing a wheelchair accessible trail between the potential wildlife-and-walkers overpass across Route 2 and the Walden Pond State Reservation if/when this is constructed.

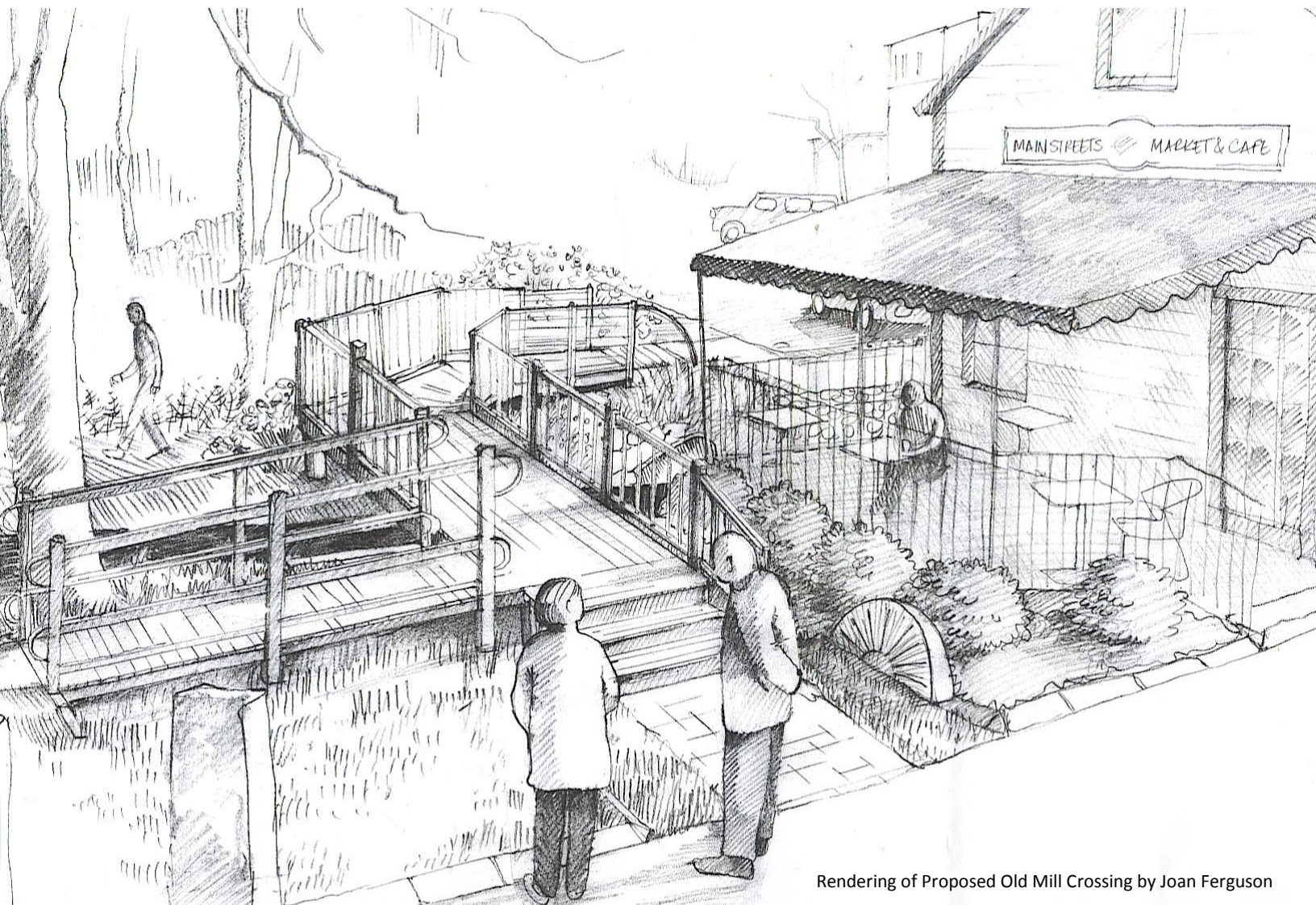
Old Mill Crossing (or Milldam Crossing). The proposed footbridge over the Mill Brook at the site of, and in recognition of, the original 1636 mill at the founding of Concord (by today's Main Streets Market & Café) should be accessible to wheelchair users. This crossing helps connect the visitor center, Town parking lots, and Monument Square.

Hillside Avenue in Sleepy Hollow Cemetery. As Marian Wheeler notes in her 1997 book, *Old Hill Burying Grounds of Concord*, Sleepy Hollow

Cemetery was established as a park for the Town, as well as a burying ground. Although the path up Authors Ridge from the parking lot to the gravesites of Emerson, Thoreau, Alcott, Hawthorne, Lothrop and others is quite steep, the cemetery lane called Hillside Avenue up the ridge's southeastern side, has a more moderate slope. It can be negotiated today by many wheelchair users. The road has been repaved but some slight grading changes and the addition of handrails at critical spots along the road would significantly improve such accessibility. For years, the main barriers to wheelchair access to Authors Ridge were two locked chains across each end of Hillside Avenue. In 2002, Concord Highways and Grounds replaced the chain at Hillside's

western end with a post in the center of the road, permitting wheelchair passage. The gentler slope at the eastern end, however, would provide an even better approach. The Task Force recommends that Hillside's eastern chain also be replaced and the road resurfaced to make this prime tourist attraction accessible to all of Concord's residents and visitors.

Reformatory Branch Trail: The abandoned railroad bed from Lowell Road to the Bedford town line should continue to be improved to assist wheelchair accessibility. In 2014, drainage improvements were implemented to improve the substrate of the trail and better manage drainage washouts occurring from Butternut Circle.



Rendering of Proposed Old Mill Crossing by Joan Ferguson